



Read Kansas!

1-3

By the Kansas State Historical Society

Famous Kansan



Susanna Madora Salter
1860-1961

Susanna Madora Salter believed that women should have the same rights as men. Salter believed that women should have the right to vote just as men did. Salter knew how to work in a business. She knew that other women could do that, too.

Susanna Madora Salter became a politician. But she did not start out to do that. Her family had settled in Argonia when it was first established. The people of the town elected Salter's father as their first mayor. Salter joined a group of women who were working for women's rights. This group did bring about one change. By the time of the next election for mayor, women could vote in city elections. But nobody expected a woman to run for office! Some of the men in town thought it would be funny to nominate a woman for mayor. As a joke they nominated Susanna Madora Salter. They did not expect anyone to vote for Salter, but people decided to give her a chance. Susanna Madora Salter won the election!



Salter took her job seriously. Newspapers around the country published stories about her. Everyone watched to see if Salter could do the job. She proved to everyone that she could. When it was time for the next election Susanna Madora Salter was busy with her own family, so she did not run for office again. She continued to work in other ways for women's rights.

People in other towns wondered if more women would run for office. Some towns were afraid that might happen, so they passed laws to stop it. Still more women became politicians and several cities elected women to public offices. When Susanna Madora Salter was elected mayor of Argonia she became the first elected woman mayor in the United States! In 1912 Kansas gave women

equal voting rights. It was eight years later before all women in the United States had that right.

